

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NAIROB 07792 091157Z

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ACTION SS-15

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 SP-02 PM-04 EB-07 IGA-01 INR-07

/043 W

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R 090920Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4999

CONFIDENTIAL NAIROBI 7792

FOR UNDER SECRETARY SISCO FROM AMBASSADOR MARSHALL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, MILI, US, KE

SUBJECT: KENYA REQUEST FOR U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE

REF: A. NAIROBI 7380; B. STATE 202893; C. TEHRAN 8358

1. IN OUR MAY 8 MEETING I SENSED YOUR SYMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING OF AND REACTION TO KENYA'S REQUEST FOR U.S. ASSISTANCE IN UPGRADING ITS DEFENSE CAPABILITY. I WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE YOUR PERSONAL SUPPORT FOR A PROMPT AND POSITIVE USG RESPONSE TO THE KENYAN REQUEST.

2. TWO ISSUES ARE AT STAKE: (1) U.S. ASSISTANCE TO KENYA AS A FACTOR FOR STABILITY IN THE EAST AFRICAN REGION; (2) U.S.-KENYAN BILATERAL RELATIONS.

3. ON FIRST ISSUE: KENYA CURRENTLY ALLOCATES ONLY SEVEN PERCENT OF ITS BUDGET FOR DEFENSE (LESS THAN ONE PERCENT OF GNP), REVENUE SINCE INDEPENDENCE HAVING BEEN CONCENTRATED ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT--WITH SUCCESS. KENYA HAS EXCEPTIONAL QUALITIES AMONG DEVELOPING NATIONS IN MAINTAINING OPEN POLITICAL SYSTEM AND MARKET ECONOMY WITH THRIVING PRIVATE SECTOR. TO PRESERVE ITS TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND ITS PRESENT POLITICAL/ECONOMIC SYSTEM, KENYA CONCLUDES IT MUST ACQUIRE GREATER DEFENSE CAPABILITIES TO COUNTER THREAT POSED BY HEAVILY ARMED NEIGHBORS. A

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DEFENSIBLE KENYA WOULD REDUCE RISK OF CONFLICT BETWEEN

COUNTRIES OF THE REGION.

4. ON SECOND ISSUE: IMPORTANCE OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE IN BILATERAL CONTEXT IS SET FORTH IN REF A, AND CURRENT STATUS OF USG CONSIDERATION IS CONTAINED REFS A THROUGH C. I ANTICIPATE THAT WITHIN TWO OR THREE WEEKS, UPON RETURN OF MINFINANCE FROM IMF MEETINGS, GOK WILL ASK US FOR FRANK APPRAISAL OF PROSPECTS FOR OBTAINING USED F-5'S. IF APPROACH TO THE SHAH NOW BEING CONSIDERED HAS YIELDED NO RESULTS, WE SHALL PROBABLY BE EMPTY-HANDED AS FAR AS USED PLANES ARE CONCERNED AND GOK WILL UNDERSTANDABLY WISH TO KNOW WHAT TERMS OF FINANCING AND AVAILABILITY MIGHT BE FOR NEW AIRCRAFT, QUITE LIKELY F5-E/F'S.

5. I RECOGNIZE THAT KENYA'S REQUEST IS CERTAINLY NOT OF HIGH PRIORITY IN THE TOTAL PICTURE OF TODAY'S PROBLEMS. NEVERTHELESS, IT SEEMS TO ME THAT OUR INTERESTS IN AREA ARE OF SUFFICIENT IMPORTANCE TO WARRANT OUR BEING MODERATELY RESPONSIVE TO KENYA'S DEFENSE NEEDS. IN MY VIEW, THE U.S. HAS AN OPPORTUNITY IN KENYA TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE WHICH MIGHT WELL PREVENT OR AT LEAST RESTRAIN FUTURE ARMED CONFLICT IN EAST AFRICA AND THE HORN.

MARSHALL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY ASSISTANCE, ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, MILITARY CAPABILITIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 SEP 1975
Decapton Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greenet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975NAIROB07792
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750311-0618
From: NAIROBI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750970/aaaackgk.tel
Line Count: 85
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 NAIROBI 7380, 75 STATE 202893, 75 TEHRAN 8358
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greenet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 AUG 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <25 NOV 2003 by greenet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KENYA REQUEST FOR U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE
TAGS: MASS, MILI, US, KE
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006